

## **FINAL**

### **Office of the Deaf & Hard of Hearing Advisory Council Meeting June 2, 2005 Minutes Deafnet Hagerstown, MD**

#### **Attendance:**

**Members:** Howard Leonard, Alexis Allenback, Ben Dubin, Robert Padden (sub for James Tucker), Ethelette Ennis, Will Johnson, Julie Moyer, Linda Webb, George Kosovich

**Absent:** Mary Pat Bromwell, Vanessa Antrum, Paul Farrell, Diane Edge, Pamela Jenkins-Dobson, Lindsay Dunn, Joshua Friedman

**Staff:** Yvonne Dunkle

**Interpreters:** Denise Perdue and Lucy Sugiyama

**CART:**

Meeting convened at 1:15 pm.

#### **Welcome and Introductions:**

Howard Leonard, Chair, introduced Harold Bible, the Director of Deafnet. Mr. Bible provided the Council with an overview of Deafnet's programs and services.

#### **Approval of March 8, 2005 minutes:**

There was no quorum at the beginning of the meeting, so Mr. Leonard suspended approval of the minutes until a quorum could be reached. Quorum was satisfied later in the meeting. At that time Ben Dubin made a motion to approve the minutes as read and George Kosovich seconded the motion.

#### **Chairperson's Report – Howard Leonard**

Howard Leonard reminded the Council members that elections for new officers are overdue. A decision was made to have elections for a new chairperson and vice-chairperson during the September meeting. The by-laws require that the chair be selected from the community members and the vice chair from the state agency representatives.

Mr. Leonard reminded the members of the importance of securing a quorum for our meetings. The Council only meets four times a year and it is frustrating when we do not have quorum to be able to make decisions. State agency representatives on the Council are able to send someone on their behalf to the meetings. Community members are not able to do this, so it becomes essential that representatives from state agencies send someone if the designated member is unable to attend. This should reduce the problem of having enough members for a quorum.

Mr. Leonard expressed his concern about the future of deaf and hard of hearing services in the State of Maryland. He said he will discuss this further under new business.

Mr. Leonard announced that he recently accepted the position of State Coordinator of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services within the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) which is a part of the State Department of Education (MSDE). Yvonne Dunkle said this raises a concern about Mr. Leonard's status on the advisory council since he was originally appointed as a provider of services for the deaf and hard of hearing (community representative). MSDE already has a representative on the Council (Paul Ferrell). Even though Mr. Leonard was recently reappointed for a second term on the Council, he may have to step down. One option mentioned was the possibility of Mr. Leonard replacing Mr. Ferrell as the MSDE representative since DORS is part of MSDE. That option would have to be discussed with Mr. Ferrell and ultimately approved by MSDE. Ms. Dunkle suggested that Mr. Leonard check with the Appointments Office to clarify his role in the advisory council and seek their guidance before proceeding any further.

### **Director's Report – Yvonne Dunkle**

Yvonne Dunkle gave recent updates. She developed new job description for the vacant Assistant Director position, which covers the office needs as well as managing the three programs. There were discussions about the minimum qualifications, including the communication skill requirements, selection process and funds available for the vacant position in the new fiscal year. Yvonne Dunkle shared ideas who would be good to serve on the interview panel – representatives from each community (deaf and hard of hearing), the advisory council, Governor's office and state agency. Feedback on these ideas was shared with her.

Yvonne Dunkle solicited ideas from the members concerning what the Office should buy with the remaining funds before the close of fiscal year of 2005.

Yvonne Dunkle shared her budget strategy plan to advocate for adding a third position for ODHH for the fiscal year of 2007. She plans to be proactive before the Governor makes the final decision on his budget that will go before the Legislature at the next legislative session in 2006.

### **Old Business:**

#### **1. Driving Schools**

Julie Moyer reported that the MVA is working on the driving schools accessibility issue and that she was told to sidestep this issue and let MVA handle this issue. She further reported that MVA is working on revising the policy on interpreter requests.

Yvonne Dunkle gave a brief update on her last conversation she had with Andy Krajewski of MVA about the driving instruction course. Basically what Andy Krajewski said that he arranged with Frederick Community College and/or Allegany College to offer the classes for those who are interested to become driver education teacher for the deaf and that he has set up the medical waiver for deaf and hard of hearing driver education teachers. Yvonne Dunkle mentioned to Andy Krajewski that

these two locations are too far for potential interested people living in Baltimore, Central Maryland areas as well as Eastern Shore. Yvonne Dunkle requested Andy Krajewski to find a community college willing to sponsor the driver instruction classes in Central Maryland area and she has not heard back from him.

Robert Padden of Maryland School for the Deaf (MSD) announced that the school decided to hire a staff person who is certified as a driving school instructor to provide driver's education to students attending MSD. Mr. Leonard said that this was a good solution for students attending MSD, it does not do anything about the needs in the rest of the state.

It was suggested that the advisory council invite the deputy secretary of MDOD to the meeting to discuss this issue or have a separate meeting with selected individuals to meet with the Deputy Secretary of MDOD. Yvonne Dunkle suggested that the Secretary of MDOD, Kris Cox, should be briefed on the issue. Then she could decide a course of action from there, which could include a meeting with members of the Advisory Council and/or her counterpart at MDOT. ODHH will contact the Secretary of MDOD.

## **2. MQAS**

Yvonne Dunkle announced that MSDE did revisit the MQAS issue and MSDE is looking into the possibility of revitalizing the MQAS program and making it a priority. Dr. Carol Ann Baglin, Assistant Superintendent of Special Education and Early Intervention Division, continues to support keeping the MQAS program.

At SESAC committee meeting, of which Yvonne Dunkle is current a member, there were discussions about NCLB regulations and one of the requirements is for qualified teachers. Yvonne Dunkle raised the point about the qualified interpreters in the educational setting, which is not part of NCLB requirements. She pointed out the problem of what good does it accomplish to have qualified teachers if they don't have qualified interpreters in place to ensure that the deaf and hard of hearing students receive quality education. Other member representing the blind community echoed Yvonne Dunkle's comments as it is similar to the quality issues of the visual interpreters that blind community faces in the educational setting. The chair of SESAC agreed to put this issue on the agenda for the next meeting on September 15, 2005.

## **3. Captioned Movies**

Yvonne Dunkle gave an update on the action item that ODHH contact the attorney general about captioned movies issue. The staff at attorney general office stated that she did not know that there is an issue about it so I was asked to develop a document with a background history of this issue, any court decisions, and additional information that would help them understand the issue. Then the attorney general will review the information and determine if it is a priority or not. Yvonne Dunkle has asked for any volunteers from the advisory council to draft a document. Ben Dubin agreed to volunteer and Yvonne Dunkle will enlist Joshua Friedman to help.

#### **4. Other Issues – State Legislation**

Ben Dubin brought up his concerns about the lack of representation by hard of hearing individuals on the task force to study visual smoke and evacuation alarms for the deaf and hard of hearing. Yvonne Dunkle explained that she already took care of this issue by urging the MDCDHH president to nominate a hard of hearing person for the Governor to appoint to serve on the task force.

Ben Dubin raised another issue about another legislative bill, a study group set up to look at the services in the higher education institutions for students with a documented disability. ODHH was not listed in the statute to serve on the study group while MDOD is. There is no representation for deaf and hard of hearing community to address communication issues in the study group.

Also, there is another legislative bill, higher education institutions for blind individual's access to technology. Why doesn't this bill incorporate technology for the deaf and hard of hearing?

Ben Dubin felt something needed to be done to address this issue of the importance to include ODHH and deaf and hard of hearing representation and needs in these important state legislation mandated efforts. There is a need for education for the legislators to include the most overlooked population when drafting the disability-related legislative bills.

#### **New Business:**

##### **1. Emergency Preparedness**

Yvonne Dunkle asked the members if they are interested inviting JoAnne Knapp of MDOD to be the guest speaker to talk about the results of regional conferences and updates on the committee work on special projects related to deaf and hard of hearing. The council supports the idea to invite JoAnne Knapp to the next meeting.

##### **2. ODHH Brochure**

Yvonne Dunkle passed around the draft of newly revised ODHH brochure and asked for the feedback from the council members. In the interest of saving time, Howard Leonard suggested that the members review the brochure at their own time and send feedback to Yvonne Dunkle.

##### **3. Nominations Committee**

Howard Leonard asked the members on the Council from state agencies to nominate someone for Vice Chair and members from the community to recommend someone to serve as the new Chair. Individual members who may be interested in either position are encouraged to nominate themselves. These names should be identified prior to the meeting in September. Elections will be held at that meeting for these two officers.

#### **4. Creation of new sub-committees**

Howard Leonard shared Yvonne Dunkle's idea of having sub-committees to address ongoing issues such as interpreting issues in the education system, driver education, etc. Mr. Leonard expressed his concern about what appears to be a loss of leadership within the deaf community. There are not as many people stepping in to assume the mantle of leadership from the previous generation. Mr. Leonard noted that recent decisions by some state agencies appear to signal less support for the needs of people who are deaf or hard of hearing. The Mental Hygiene Administration decided not to fill the vacant position of Director of Mental Health Services for the Deaf. MSDE had decided at one point to discontinue the Quality Assurance Screening for educational interpreters. The Maryland Coalition of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing has not proved to be effective.

Other disability groups have been effective in pushing their causes in the drive to compete for their share of limited funding. Some people have acknowledged this disparity by saying that deaf people are not "vocal" enough. The void in leadership has often been filled by people who worked for state agencies and nonprofits serving this population. However, many of these people were limited in their ability to speak out about the need for change. Those that could and did, have started to burn out or have moved out of state. Mr. Leonard said that the Council should try to bring attention to issues such as the need to improve programs for deaf and hard of hearing people who have mental illness, substance abuse problems or could be considered low-functioning. They also need to step in to champion the needs of young deaf children in public schools who are not receiving an appropriate education or do not have access to qualified interpreters. He suggested that the ODHH establish committees to assess the state of deaf and hard of hearing services. The committees could include members of the Council as well as individuals who are knowledgeable about different issues. He suggested using the comprehensive report that was done in 1987 by the Commission on the Hearing Impaired as a starting point. They made specific recommendations in all areas of state services. The committees could identify areas of progress as well as the need for improvement. These outcomes could help establish priority areas for ODHH.

#### **Open Forum**

No one from the public showed up for the Open Forum.

#### **Announcements:**

The next meeting will be on Thursday, September 8, 2005 in Montgomery County. The location will be determined later.

Howard Leonard announced that DORS is seeking someone who is deaf or hard of hearing as a potential candidate for the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council. He said he would forward members more information via email.

Julie Moyer announced that she has information from Joyce Callahan of MTA regarding the public hearings on proposed change to the bus system. Also, the TTYs will be

updated and Julie Moyer would like to have our opinions on the new technology like one line or two lines display on the TTY be the best choice.

Ben Dubin questioned Yvonne Dunkle why ODHH did not set up its exhibit booth at the World of Possibilities Expo in Baltimore County. Yvonne Dunkle stated that ODHH did set up its booth at the World of Possibilities last year and this year she chose not to attend the two-day event due to not being able to take time away from the office for the whole two days. She further stated that she was spread out too thin with too many commitments. Ben Dubin thought that Yvonne Dunkle could have asked the members of the advisory council to cover the ODHH booth or have presence to leave the materials with the MDOD for them to pass out on behalf of ODHH which would have been helpful.

Will Johnson moved to adjourn the meeting and Ben Dubin seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 4:15 pm.